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What place discourse, what role rigorous argumentation? Against the standard image of Hadot's conception of ancient philosophy as a way of life

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A 1994 collection edited by Jocelyn Couture and Kai Nielson, *Métaphilosophie? Reconstructing Philosophy*, responds to what the editors describe as a reviving interest in metaphilosophy.¹ The collection, based on a special edition of the *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, spans pieces in two languages from over a dozen professional contributors. It aims at an authoritative, representative sample of later modern philosophical views on the timeless questions which still perplex most non-academics as much as Socrates' 'men of Athens': why would anyone want to study or 'do' philosophy? What use or goods does it serve? Is it a worthwhile pursuit, and one the public should sponsor, in a world of so many competing social, political and economic demands?

As Nielson and Couture's 'Introduction—Construing Philosophy' lays out, the metaphilosophical debates amongst professional philosophers turn largely on philosophy's fate in an age when first the natural, and more recently the human, sciences have seemingly usurped philosophy's authority concerning 'first order' questions about the world.² A host of responses to the seemingly endless 'ends of philosophy' that have resulted in the last 200 years are examined. For Isaiah Berlin, the 'purpose of philosophy' is to deal with those 'perplexities' which remain, once all the questions we *do* know how to answer have been attended to, by way of

1 Jocelyn Couture and Kai Nielson, *Métaphilosophie? Reconstructing Philosophy* being *Canadian Journal of Philosophy: Vol. 23, Supplementary Volume 19* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1994).

2 Jocelyn Couture and Kai Nielson, 'Introduction—Construing Philosophy' in their *Métaphilosophie? Reconstructing Philosophy*, 1-55, esp. 13-15. For version of this claim that philosophy just is, in the age of the sciences at least, a 'second order discipline' see P.M.S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth Century Analytic Philosophy?* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 272-3; A.R. White, 'Conceptual Analysis', in C.J. Bontempo & S.J. Odell (eds.), *The Owl of Minerva: Philosophers on Philosophy* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975), 104.

'careful and disciplined reflection'.³ For an entire 'therapeutic' stream in modern philosophy, philosophers in an age of science can use their analytic, logical or reflective acumen to show how Berlin's extra-scientific perplexities pliantly disappear when we correctly examine the languages we use and reshape the presuppositions we bring to the table. Or else they can show that these pseudo-problems should be left for poets, priests, and dreamers. Whereof one cannot speak, one at least *should* remain silent.

For many others, since philosophers can no longer declaim (or we can, but few listen) about nature, economy, society, political or metaphysical realities, philosophy's role can be to 'talk *about* the talk' involved in first order discourses on these topics. This is a consolatory direction which intersects with, and goes some way to explaining, why so much of 20th century philosophy focused on language, as well as taking the historicising turn.⁴ A bolder line or lineages looking back to Kant from Anglo-American thinkers like Passmore or Hampshire⁵ (and much of continental thought, not considered, after Husserl and Heidegger) holds out that, although philosophy can no longer tell us about what is, it can reflectively elucidate the 'transcendental' categories people are 'always already' committed to when they do talk about the world.⁶ But these transcendental lineages, again, have been almost ceaselessly challenged. On the continental, historicising side, well-founded observations have been concerning the cultural relativity and temporal dynamism of allegedly 'transcendental' categories.⁷ More recently, analytic or Anglo-American philosophy has been shaken by Quine's questioning of the 'second dogma of empiricism' that we could insulate analytic or *a priori* categories from the *a posteriori*, then Donald Davidson's devastating deconstruction of the incoherencies attending any strong scheme-content distinction.⁸

3 Berlin's position is discussed at Couture and Nielson, 'Introduction—Construing Philosophy', 8-12.

4 Couture and Nielson, 'Introduction—Construing Philosophy', 13-14 ('talk about the talk about the world').

5 Couture and Nielson, 'Introduction—Construing Philosophy', 18-24.

6 Cf. Paul Gilbert and Stephen Burwood, *An Introduction to Metaphilosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), 37-40.

7 Cf. Couture and Nielson, 'Introduction—Construing Philosophy', 21-23.

8 Some philosophers in the European legacy, whose kind of position Couture and Nielson do not raise, have made bold to question scientificity itself, whether by underscoring science's categorical debts to things it can't explain (for example, as in Husserl, the laws of logic); by highlighting the incredible difficulties surrounding the 'hard question' about how, if at all, naturalistic approaches can

Two comments on Couture and Nielson's collection serve to introduce what follows. First, it is clear that none of the answers précised above, or those covered in the collection *Métaphilosophie* would likely speak to most non-academics.⁹ Instead, in a way which in one sense is healthy for the profession, all comers take for granted that academic philosophy, with its specific later modern history, problems, and ways of thinking, debating and writing, is given, here to stay and will continue—even if only *by* continuing to wrestle with those 'philosophical' species of 'anti-philosophy' represented by the names of Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Rorty, Quine and others.¹⁰

Secondly, it is remarkable that in this collection, the very idea that philosophy might be (and as it happens, is) also an activity carried out by human beings who need to be trained or formed into these specific ways of thinking, speaking, and writing in the context of specific institutions and disciplinary programs, is raised in only two of the articles.¹¹ The idea that 'philosophy', even as a professional discipline and set of institutional realities, is in the business of trying to form *students* with specific intellectual and (perhaps) practical skills or virtues is likewise basically invisible. Passmore pitches his argument about philosophy as a mode of critical self-reflection, at one point, against the idea that philosophy would only be 'a way of life': by which he means one professional career choice amongst others, which it nevertheless remains for a minority of people.¹² Gilles Gaston-Granger mentions philosophy as an *ascese*, commenting in

... speak meaningfully to our phenomenological self-experience; or, opening philosophy out onto social and political questions, asking about the tensions between science and technologies' developments and the human *lebenswelt*, including peoples' continuing aspirations to live well, individually and collectively. Couture and Nielson's collection does not include these perspectives, except in Thomas McCarthy's contribution, Thomas McCarthy, 'Deconstruction and Reconstruction in Contemporary Critical Theory', pp. 247-264.

9 This is not to say that these questions and traditions are not real and important. It is to make a sociological observation concerning the place of philosophy in larger polities.

10 See Couture and Nielson, 'Introduction—Construing Philosophy', 3-7, with Simon Blackburn, 'Can Philosophy Exist?' in *Métaphilosophie? Reconstructing Philosophy*, 83-93.

11 Compare the contenders analysed in Soren Overgaard, Paul Gilbert and Stephen Burwood, *An Introduction to Metaphilosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), 'What is Philosophy?', 17-44 (part of science, immature science, midwife or 'residue' of the sciences, Platonism, the logic of science, contribution to human understanding, transcendental inquiry, articulation and argument for world-views, edifying conversation).

passing that philosophy's cultivation of reasoned reflection 'counterbalances [people's] immediate natural reactions'. As such, he argues, philosophy's contribution to humanistic *bildung* should engender in students 'a sense of the complexity of the human' necessary for sound political and wider judgment.¹³ But he is quick to limit this what he terms a 'formal matter'.¹⁴

Nielson and Couture's collection, it seems to us, reflects deep-set 'traditional' developments (to use the term in the contemporary analytic sense) in modern academic Western philosophy cut across the 20th century analytic-continental divide. For all contenders, philosophy just is a type of reflective, analytic, synthetic, critical or historicising activity whose institutional locales are the classroom and the conference or seminar hall. Its products are less people than arguments, monographs (40-100,000 words) and refereed journal articles written in a precisely delimited 'argumentative' style (4-10,000 words). Book reviews (1000-2500 words) form an increasingly poor cousin unrecognised in most governmental metrics and employment panels.¹⁵ A historian, sociologist, or political scientist might find it useful to reflect upon philosophy conducted in this way, from the outside—as a 'tradition' which dates no farther back than von Humboldt in Germany, and in the anglosphere even later, as one of Nielson and Couture's contributors notes.¹⁶ Should anyone suggest that philosophy *per se* might have a different or wider humanistic purview than this, as the French classicist, philologist and philosopher Pierre Hadot famously did after 1960, we shall be bound to inform her that this is not really philosophy. Or else we shall have to say

12 John Passmore, 'Demarcating Philosophy' in *Métaphilosophie? Reconstructing Philosophy*, 107-8.

13 Gaston-Granger, 'A quoi sert la philosophie?', 58. See Passmore's comments against specialisation and 'philostinism' at Passmore, 'Demarcating Philosophy', 117.

14 Gilles Gaston-Granger, 'A quoi sert la philosophie?' *Métaphilosophie? Reconstructing Philosophy*, 64.

15 For an open statement of this otherwise assumed position, see Blackburn, 'Can Philosophy Exist?', 102: 'there is no way to get to get a purchase on the truth or falsity of such theses [whether there is an *a priori*, questions of normative epistemology ...] except in the ways we are trained for: deploying the arguments, distinctions, techniques that have filled journals such as *Philosophical Review* or *Mind ...*' That such arguments or distinctions might arise in discussions, or other literary media, is not argued for or demonstrated.

16 Compare Overgaard, Gilbert and Burwood, *An Introduction to Metaphilosophy*, 17-20 on 'really-existing philosophy' today.

that when Hadot claims that 'philosophy' was first and foremost a 'way of life' in the West, he was ceding to nostalgia. Hadot confuses philosophy proper with its religious, poetic, medical, spiritual or other pre-rational prehistories.

This in any case *is* exactly what has happened to Hadot, outside of his limited continental reception mediated via Michel Foucault's later work,¹⁷ and his acceptance as more or less authoritative amongst historians of ideas like Stephen Gaukroger, Peter Harrison, Ian Hunter, and Wayne Hankey.¹⁸ '[C]an we really believe,' Bernard Williams asked in a paradigmatic, acerbic review of Martha Nussbaum's *Therapy of Desire* on the Hellenistic thinkers, 'that philosophy, properly understood in terms of rigorous argument, could be so directly related to curing real human misery, the kind of suffering that priests and doctors and – indeed – therapists address?'¹⁹ Despite the nearly-600 pages of evidences adduced in Nussbaum's tome to this effect, William's answer remains a bearish 'no', or at least that the answer had *better* be 'no'. For, Williams reminds us, 'we' now agree or know that philosophy just is the exercise of 'rigorous argument', leading to books, reviews and journal articles, and otherwise floating more or less free of any existential or ethical purpose.²⁰ Even analytic classicist John M. Cooper, whose 2012 *opus Pursuits of Wisdom* was devoted to analysing the ample ancient testimony about philosophy as a *biou gubernētēs*, 'steersman of life', pre-empts things on page 17 of his book. Here, he informs us that he is assuming²¹:

17 On Foucault's later work on the ancients, see Edward F. McGushin, *Foucault's Askēsis* (USA: Northwestern, 2007), and Michel Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject Lectures at the Collège de France 1981-1982* translated by Frédéric Gros, edited by Graham Burchell (Picador; Reprint edition, 2005).

18 For a sample of work in the history of ideas that draws from Hadot, see Stephen Gaukroger, *Francis Bacon and the Transformation of Early-Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001); Peter Harrison, *Territories of Science and Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); Sorana Corneanu, *Regimens of the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); John Sellars, 'De Constantia: A Stoic Spiritual Exercise', *Poetics Today* Volume 28, Number 3 (2007): 339-362; W.J. Hankey, 'Philosophy as Way of Life for Christians? Iamblichan and Porphyrian Reflections on Religion', *Virtue, and Philosophy in Thomas Aquinas*, 'Laval Théologique et Philosophique', 59:2 [Le Néoplatonisme] (Juin 2003): 193-224; Ian Hunter, *Rival Enlightenments: Civil and Metaphysical Philosophy in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001).

19 Bernard Williams, 'Do Not Disturb', *London Review of Books*, Vol. 16 No. 20 (October 1994), pp. 25-26.

20 Williams, 'Do Not Disturb', 25.

...that for the ancients with whom I am concerned, exactly as with us, the essential core of philosophy is a certain, specifically and recognisably philosophical, style of logical, reasoned argument and analysis. Anyone who has read any philosophy at all is familiar with this style, whether it takes the form we find in the question-and-answer dialectic of the character Socrates in Plato's Socratic dialogues ... or, again, in the writings of a contemporary analytic philosopher.²²

A similar claim that the ancients were, or should have been 'exactly as with us' metaphilosophically surfaces in Martha Nussbaum's book on ancient therapeutic philosophy when she writes about Michel Foucault. To the extent that these figures claim that ancient philosophy was not exhausted by or primarily devoted to the production of written, rigorously argued philosophical discourse, Nussbaum agrees with Cooper and Williams that the specific nature and dignity of 'philosophy' is threatened.²³ The concern is that what must demarcate philosophy (even when it *is* undeniably therapeutic, *pace* Williams) from 'religion,'²⁴ just has to be

21 In a way that duly commits him to excising the Pythagoreans and Cynics from philosophical status: 'I think it is better to treat the long-lasting and fascinating movement of Cynicism in ancient Greece and the Roman Empire as aspects of social history, rather than as part of the history of philosophy.' John M. Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom: Six Ways of Life in Ancient Philosophy from Socrates to Plotinus* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 62 n. 54; cf. pp. 21–22. Here, Cooper departs from unchallenged ancient consensus, although he does not remark on this. See Diogenes Laertius, *The Lives of the Philosophers*, 'Book VI: The Cynics' and 'Book VII: Pythagoreans', translated by Robert Drew Hicks, online at:

https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/diogenes_laertius/lives_of_the_important_philosophers/complete.html, last accessed April 2015.

22 Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom*, 17. I have argued for this assessment and criticism of Cooper's reading of the ancients in *Pursuits of Wisdom* at length in Matthew Sharpe, 'Drafted into a Foreign War: On the Very Idea of Philosophy as a Way of Life', in *Ancient Philosophy and Analytic Philosophy*, ed. Alberto Vanzo and Catherine Rowett (UK: Oxford University Press, 2016 [in press]).

23 Martha Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993), 5-6, 373. Foucault's work on the Hellenistic philosophers, Nussbaum claims, 'fails to confront the fundamental commitment to reason that divides philosophical techniques *du soi* from other such techniques'.

24 In the opening pages of *Pursuits*, Cooper adds the historical claim that when Hadot tells us that ancient philosophy in the different schools involved 'spiritual exercises' or forms of 'asceticism', this at most describes philosophy in its late antique decline, once it had undergone a fatal 'contamination ... by religion' in neoPlatonic, then Christian, thought. Cooper, *Pursuits*, 22.

something very like 'its commitment to rational argument'²⁵, 'the pursuit of logical validity, intellectual coherence, and truth'²⁶ can admit no place to extra-cognitive practices or 'technologies of the self'. After all:

... many forms of life in the ancient world purveyed [what Foucault calls] *techniques du soi* ... what sets Stoicism [and philosophy more widely] apart from other forms of ... therapy is its very particular concern for the student's own active exercise of argument. For all these habits and routines [Foucault and Hadot describe in their talk of *techniques du soi* or *exercices spirituels*] are useless if not rational ...²⁷

There are many possible criticisms of Hadot and Foucault's claims about classical philosophy, of 'philosophy as a way of life'.²⁸ This paper responds only to the criticism introduced above, as voiced in the work of Williams, Cooper and Nussbaum. This points (first) to an unacceptable or 'non-philosophical' misrepresentation of the place of rational argumentation and discourse in Hadot's claims about ancient philosophy. It holds that Hadot et al's positing a larger existential role for ancient philosophy in forming the self *just must* mean that (secondly) ancient philosophy's discursive callings are directly undermined or sidelined in his picture—to be supplanted by some form of meaningfully 'religious' concerns or practice, or by forms of imaginative poetry or rhetoric. I take this criticism of the idea of philosophy as a way of life to be paradigmatic amongst (particularly analytically trained) academic philosophers

25 Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire*, 373.

26 Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire*, 5.

27 Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire*, 373. It is notable that Hadot challenges the idea that ancient religious practices included anything like the exercises developed in the philosophical schools, at Pierre with Hadot, *The Present Alone is our Happiness*, Conversations with Jeannie Carlier and Arnold I. Davidson, translated by Marc Djaballah (Stanford: Stanford UP: 2009), 36: 'In the Greek and Roman religions, which did not involve an inner commitment of the individual but were primarily social phenomena, the notion of spiritual exercises was absent...' The sense that ancient religions involved such exercises, he claims is an anachronistic projection back based on our greater familiarity with different and subsequent religious traditions.

28 Not least the social-justice complaint that any and all such interest in self-formation is elitist (what students today might call a 'first world' concern), if not narcissistic. For a strong recent statement of this kind of criticism, from a broadly Marxist and theological perspective, see Roland Boer, *Vale of Tears* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 252-260.

—although there are also continental variants of the position imaginable.²⁹ This kind of criticism reflects the way philosophy is practiced and understood by many professionals across today's philosophical subdisciplines (ethics, metaphysics, epistemology, ontology ...), a self-conception encouraged by institutional incentives which measure *written* 'outcomes' in assessing professionals' credentials. It also points to a real tension between philosophy's perennial aiming at the truth and engendering happiness: a tension condensed in the ancient conceptions of *sophia* or *sapientia*.³⁰ Accordingly, however much defenders of Hadot's or Foucault's later work can be tempted to dismiss these criticisms as fundamentally ill-founded, they are deeply important. They are also very real barriers to the very idea of philosophy as a way of life being taken seriously in contemporary philosophical discourse.

Our method to assess these criticisms will involve looking closely at three untranslated papers Pierre Hadot wrote which we will show directly address criticisms very like Nussbaum, Cooper, Williams *et al*'s *avant la lettre*.³¹ These papers, we will try to show, demonstrate that Hadot maintained that there is an inescapably vital role for philosophical argumentation in philosophy as a way of life in the ancient schools—*while* proposing that the ancient philosophers also recommended extra-cognitive 'spiritual exercises' to facilitate students' *living* certain kinds of lives. Hadot indeed severally stresses, especially in 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique', just how important practices of *dialogue* were throughout the classical period, as we will see.

Part I of what follows lays out, as briefly as possible, what we will call the 'standard view' of Hadot promoted by the texts that have been translated hitherto, and which has attracted Cooper, Nussbaum *et al*'s criticisms about misrepresenting the place of rational argument in philo-

29 Clearly, for instance, Heidegger's task to disclose the meaning of Being, while drawing on certain characteristic modes of experience (notably, angst), is primarily a kind of discursive activity; as deconstruction is an operation performed in writing about others writings ... and so on.

30 See Pierre Hadot, 'La Figure du Sage', in *Études de Philosophie Ancienne* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2010 [*deuxième tirage*]), 233-236.

31 The papers in question being Pierre Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', in *Études de Philosophie Ancienne* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2010 [*deuxième tirage*]), pp. 207-232; Pierre Hadot, 'Les Divisions des Parties de la Philosophie dans l'Antiquité', in *Études de Philosophie Ancienne*, 125-158; Pierre Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans l'Antiquité', in *Études de Philosophie Ancienne*, 159-193.

sophy '*comme manière de vivre*'. In Part II, will we see how several of Hadot's pieces mentioned above, led by 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', indicate his own much more qualified perspectives about the place of discourse in ancient philosophy conceived as a way of life.

Part 1. The 'standard image' of Hadot's ancient philosophy as a way of life: rigorous argument in philosophy?

Pierre Hadot's work on ancient philosophy as a way of life has become available to Anglophone readers through *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, *Philosophy as a Way of Life* and *The Inner Citadel: on the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius* in particular.³² First, ancient philosophy across all the schools was conceived, and practiced, as a way of life:

All of the ancient philosophical schools refused to consider philosophical activity as purely intellectual or as purely theoretical in form ...³³ As Epictetus says it: 'the carpenter does not say to you: 'hear my argument on the art of carpentry', but he makes the contract for the house and he builds it [...] Do the same yourself [as a philosopher]. Eat as a man, drink as a man, [...] get married, have children, participate in civic life, strive to endure your injuries, and support other men...'³⁴

This idea comes first and last for Hadot. Second, to seriously undertake a 'course of study' (if that is the term) in one of the ancient schools was thereby to have made an existential commitment: to try to live, outside the classroom, according to the categories which one was taught within it: '[the ancients] considered philosophy as a choice, which committed all of a person's life and their entire psyche (*toute l'âme*).'³⁵

32 Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, ed. A. Davidson, trans. M. Chase (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996); Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?* Translated by Michael Chase (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2002); Pierre Hadot, *The Inner Citadel*, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001)

33 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 216.

34 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 216-7.

35 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 211. Hadot's stress on the choice of a philosophical way of life has also attracted criticism. At times, for instance at *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 82, this choice can seem fideistic, not rational ('... the choice of a way of life [was] not . . . located at the end of the process of philosophical activity, like a kind of accessory or appendix. On the contrary, its stands at the beginning, in a complex interrelationship with

Third, philosophical study in the schools for this reason involved the adoption and practice of regimes of 'spiritual exercises' to form or transform *toute l'âme*³⁶. This means, to echo a Stoic tripartition to which Hadot recurs, transforming not simply the students' thoughts or judgments (like philosophy as we know it today), but also their impulses and actions, desires and passions.³⁷ These exercises far exceeded the kinds of examinations and essays we set students in order to inform and form them intellectually. They included many practices presently considered non-philosophical: practices of meditation, imaginative visualisation, pre-meditation, recollection, protreptic exhortation, 'notes to self' (*hypomnēmata*), consoling and counselling:

Alongside the exercise of meditation may be added many other spiritual exercises: amongst the Stoics, inner detachment with regard to objects and persons or preparations intended to make us capable of overcoming future difficulties; the memory of past pleasures and fraternal correction amongst the Epicureans; and the examination of conscience, finally, ... a practice common to all the ancient philosophical schools.³⁸

Fourth, the ancient philosopher was hence, as it were, a distinct cultural type recognisable by ancient men and women, not because of the

critical reaction to other existential attitudes...') Cf. François Renaud, 'Philosophy as a Way of Life; Qu'est-ce que c'est le Philosophie Antique? Review', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Volume 35, Number 4, October 1997, pp. 637-640, pp. 639-640; John M. Cooper, 'Socrates and Philosophy as a Way of Life', in *Maieusis: Essays in Ancient Philosophy in Honour of Myles Burnyeat*, ed. Dominic Scott (Oxford: Oxford UP), 20-42, esp. p. 26; Thomas Flynn, 'Philosophy as a Way of Life: Foucault and Hadot', *Philosophy and Social Criticism* vol 31 nos 5-6 (2005), pp. 609-622, esp. pp. 616-618.

36 The *locus classicus* on this subject is Pierre Hadot, 'Spiritual Exercises' in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 81-125.

37 For Hadot's claims concerning the three disciplines of judgment, assent and desire in Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, see Pierre Hadot, 'Marcus Aurelius,' in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, pp. 179-205; also Hadot *Inner Citadel*, chapter 5, pp. 82-98, and several untranslated pieces in French, notably Hadot, 'La Physique Comme Exercice Spirituel ou Pessimisme et Optimisme chez Marc Aurèle' in Pierre Hadot, *Exercices Spirituels et Philosophie Antique*, Préface d'Arnold Davidson (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 2002), pp. 145-64, and Pierre Hadot, 'Une Clé des Pensées de Marc Aurèle: Les Trois Topoi Philosophiques selon Épictète', in *Exercices Spirituels et Philosophie Antique*, pp. 165-192.

38 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 215. Again, see Hadot, 'Spiritual Exercises' in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 81-125.

excellent discourses they may have written, but by their manner of speaking, acting, dressing and dying—whether to be hymned, as in Plutarch on Phocion, Arian's *Discourses* of Epictetus, or Diogenes' life of Epicurus, or to be the butt of ridicule as in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, Lucian's *Philosophers for Sale* and other satires.³⁹ Fifth, the ideal of this cultural type was the figure of the Sage: a kind of counterfactual, perfected human being like Socrates, Epicurus or the younger Cato, presented to students as the living achievement of *Sophia* as an all-encompassing *technē tou biou*, at least insofar as such *sophia* is achievable by mortals at all.⁴⁰

Sixth, throughout the ancient world would-be 'philosophers' who prided themselves on their dialectical or rhetorical abilities alone were the object of philosophers' own satirical jibes:

In the third century BCE, the Platonic philosopher Polemon reproached certain of his contemporaries for wanting to be admired in their dialectical interrogations, but who contradicted themselves ... in their inner dispositions.⁴¹ It is above all in the concerns of life, Polemon said, that is necessary to exercise oneself. Many centuries later, the Stoic Epictetus ... spoke with scorn of these philosophers who do not go further than cultivating a beautiful style or dialectical subtlety.⁴²

If we ask Hadot bluntly, '*so where's the evidence?*' for this exotic conception of philosophy, Hadot responds by pointing to the *philological* issues that brought him to his metaphilosophical view. Hadot began his academic life as a philologist, and:

39 See Hadot, 'Forms of Life and Forms of Discourse', *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 57–58.

40 For modern commentaries, see Pierre Hadot, 'La Figure du Sage dans L'Antiquité Gréco-Latine,' in *Études de Philosophie Antique* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2010), 233–58; also Julia Annas, 'The Sage in Ancient Philosophy,' in *Anthropine Sophia*, ed. F. Alesse et al. (Naples: Bibliopolis 2008), 11–27. For ancient Stoic texts, see especially Stobaeus, *Anthology*, 2.5–12 (which is 'Text 102' in *The Stoics Reader: Selected Writings and Testimonia*, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson and Brad Inwood [London: Hackett Publishing, 2008], 124–51; the relevant sections on the surpassing virtues of the sage are numbered by the editors 5b10–12 (pp. 128–29), 11d (pp. 140–41), 11g (pp. 142–43), 11j–k (pp. 144–46).

41 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, IV.18.

42 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 211. See Epictetus, *Discourses*, trans. W.A. Oldfather (UK: Loeb Classical Library [218], 1928) volume III, ch. 23.

... like many of my predecessors and contemporaries, I was struck by the well-known phenomenon of the seeming incoherencies or contradictions that one encounters in the works of the philosophical authors in antiquity ...⁴³

To the extent that we do attempt to read ancient texts as drafts for the kinds of professional academic writing we recognise today, we will be bemused, underwhelmed or confounded. Our first option, taken by many analytical and continental authors, will be to simply ignore a large part of these writings in order to get to the 'argumentative content' or, perhaps (to imagine a Heideggerian) the philosopher's 'conception of *Sein*.' As for figures like Diogenes of Sinope—and indeed all of the philosophers Diogenes Laertius tells us about who appear to have written nothing—we will have to follow John M. Cooper and exclude them as 'not an instance of philosophy ... at all.'⁴⁴

Hadot's different wager, for which he cites a decisive debt to the later Wittgenstein (on whom he wrote four essays, now collected in *Wittgenstein et les limites du langage*)⁴⁵, is to suspend the assumption that ancient philosophers wanted to play the same 'language games' as we do. Once we do this, we need not be threatened or bemused by the sheer proliferation of different genres in which what the ancients called 'philosophy' was purveyed: a polyphony which make our essays, reviews and monographs seem historically contingent and comparatively limited. In a course at the *Collège de Hautes Etudes* of 1979-1980, Hadot thus set about dividing this proliferation of forms of written philosophy. His *divisio* divides ancient philosophical texts first into poetic, prose, and dialogical genres (alongside those philosophers who spoke, but did not write at all). Then, using Aristotle's four causes as his heuristic, he proceeds to divide the texts under these heads into well over 20 different genres, ranging from apophatic writings, hymns, myths, prayers, lives and consolations, through to the lectures notes, responses and refutations or systematic presentations we might credit as 'serious' philosophising

43 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 207. Cf. Pierre Hadot, *Present Alone is Our Happiness: Conversations with Jeannie Carlier and Arnold L. Davidson*, trans. Marc Djaballah (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 30–32, 59.

44 Cooper, *Pursuits*, 61.

45 Pierre Hadot, *Wittgenstein et les limites du langage* (Paris: Vrin: Bibliothèque d'Histoire de la Philosophie: Poche, 2004).

today.⁴⁶

What this diversity of ancient philosophical writing forces us to accept is that the ancients' was a very different, and perhaps much broader, metaphilosophy than anything like what Nielson and Couture's collection (introduced above) considers. For there is only one plausible account of the necessary and sufficient conditions of this ancient generic diversity of philosophical writing, Hadot reasons. This is that ancient philosophers felt their writings should affect and *form* audiences in host of different ways (from consoling them, to urging them to philosophise, to inspiring them against hardships, to training them in how to read or how to argue, and more). There was a lively sense that aspiring philosophers were not 'pure minds' whose theoretical life and pursuits might somehow float free of all wider existential, ethical and political concerns.

Herein, with the question of what Hadot in 1979-'80 calls the 'external finality of the texts', lies our issue. Hadot argues against our uncritically accepting the presupposition that ancient philosophical writing, and ancient philosophers more widely, ever aimed *solely* at conveying the Truth for its own sake or constructing systems. 'We thus see that, in a general manner, theoretical and systematic discourse was aimed ... at producing an effect upon the soul of the auditor or the reader,' Hadot reflects in 'Ancient Philosophy, An Ethics or a Practice?':

This is not to say that this theoretical discourse doesn't respect the demands of logical coherence. But its presentation, its literary form and content are modified by the pedagogical intention to influence the students. Towards this end, rhetorical means are abundantly utilised by the philosopher. It thus happens that we can, in many ancient texts, pass rapidly from theoretical exposition to exhortation, as [for instance] is often the case in the treaties of Plotinus ...⁴⁷

The critical readers at this point can and have retorted: if even *rhetoric*, the ancient Gorgianic foe of philosophy *per se*, can thereby be allowed in Hadot's version of ancient philosophising, what can the place of rigorous argument be in this? And if the 'external finality' of Hadot's ancient

46 Pierre Hadot, 'Course de *L'École Pratique des Hautes Études*. Année 1979-1980', in Pierre Hadot, *Études de Patristique et D'Histoire des Concepts* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2010), 162-167.

47 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 214.

philosophising was always seemingly non- or extra-discursive, residing in an existentially transformed student rather than a well-parsed monograph or essay, why need we bother with philosophical discourse, or with systematic theory-construction? As Hadot reflects in 'Ancient Philosophy, An Ethics or a Practice?' concerning Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* (alongside the *Enneads*, arguably Hadot's most abiding and key exemplar):

The *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, for example, represent a written text which, from one end to the other, is a spiritual exercise. And precisely, because of this work, we can observe how, in this effort to transform himself *one can say in a certain sense that all means are good*. To redress mistaken opinions, tenacious pre-judgements or unreasonable terrors, it is necessary in some way to force them in another direction, [*even*] to *exaggerate* to compensate against them.⁴⁸

To adapt a phrase from Quine, at this point shouldn't we as philosophers worry that 'the fence is down'⁴⁹—not (happily, as Quine supposed) between philosophy and science, but (unhappily, as Hadot's critics stress) between philosophy and *any or all* forms of fictive, imaginative, charismatic, and irrationalist imposture? What role can remain for what we today take to be distinctly philosophical modes of discourse and argumentation in Hadot's image of ancient thought?

Part 2. The place of theoretical dialectic in Hadot's conception of ancient philosophy

The Stoics thought that 'logic,' one of the three parts of philosophical discourse, had at least four levels. Or so Hadot argues in 'Ancient Philosophy, An Ethics or a Practice'.⁵⁰ One of these, which Hadot calls 'lived logic' (*logique vécue*), aimed to put us on our guard against the kinds of informal fallacies our passions push us towards, like the passions understandably involved in defending a widespread self-understanding of philosophy as solely a discursive, argumentative, writerly business.⁵¹ With this kind of 'lived logic' in view, let us say that it is one thing for Hadot to have held that ancient philosophy *included* and prescribed non-

48 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 215 (italics ours).

49 Willard Van Orman Quine, *Quine in Dialogue* ed. Dagfinn Føllesdal, Douglas B. Quine (Harvard: Harvard UP, 2008), 337.

50 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 217.

51 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 217-218.

or extra-cognitive exercises to habituate students, with the three-fold goal of tranquillity of mind (*ataraxia*), inner liberty (*autarchia*), and *conscience cosmique* (consciousness of the whole).⁵² It would have been quite another if Hadot had promoted the idea that philosophical discourse (about logic, physics, ethics, politics, metaphysics, theology ...) had *no* place in ancient thought. Yet he never did this. Accordingly, as we will see, it is a question of establishing *what* Hadot assigned to rational argumentation in his image of ancient philosophy, and whether his position on this issue is adequate both in itself, and relative to the ancient materials.

To be fair to him, even in his more-widely-known texts unfolding what Part I called the 'standard image' of Hadotian ancient philosophy, Hadot does go to some length to guard his readers against supposing that his idea of ancient philosophy speaks against rational philosophical argumentation. Hadot's point is just that philosophical discourse and more or less formal, often-written argumentation cannot claim to be the whole of which it was always only ever *the key part*.⁵³ So what then are the positive roles that Hadot thinks spoken or written rational discourse had in ancient philosophy?

Firstly, as Hadot stresses, spoken or written philosophical discourse remained in the ancient world the only way the philosopher could communicate his teachings to students in order to have any pedagogical or existential effect upon them.⁵⁴ Typically, Hadot claims that the more or less systematic philosophical discourses of the ancient philosophers on

52 Hadot nominates this as one of three ideals at play in 'wisdom as a mode of life' in Hellenistic and Roman thought, alongside tranquillity and '*conscience cosmique*' at Pierre Hadot, 'La Philosophie comme Manière de Vivre', in in *Exercices Spirituels et Philosophie Antique* (Paris: Broché, 2002), esp. 291-292.

53 Speaking against the idea that philosophical discourse and writing was the whole or principal goal of ancient philosophy, first and foremost, is the amply attested fact we have also stated that many recognised philosophers, led by Socrates, seem never to written a philosophical word. Secondly, there is the equally abundantly attested phenomenon we have seen, that when ancient philosophers did write, a good deal of what they wrote differs markedly from what would today be publishable in *Analysis* or any other peer-reviewed professional journal.

54 Philosophical discourse, in Hadot's words, 'is a privileged means by which the philosopher can act upon himself and others: for if it is the expression of the existential option of the person who utters it, discourse always has, directly or indirectly, a function which is formative, educative, psychagogic, and therapeutic' Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, trans. M. Chase (USA: Belknap Press, 2002), 176.

the one hand 'radiated out from'⁵⁵ the school's conception of philosophy 'as an exercise of virtue and wisdom ... a unique act, renewed at each instant'⁵⁶ and on the other hand examined, explained, contextualised, and sometimes also advertised⁵⁷ this conception and way of life.⁵⁸

Secondly, Hadot repeats that there is nothing in his metaphilosophical purview of philosophy as a way of living that prevents rational systematisation being central to their conceptions of what they were doing. There are (for instance) the systematic epitomes of Epicurean teaching we find in Epicurus' extant letters concerning ethics and physics preserved in Diogenes Laertius; and many other texts from every school could be cited.⁵⁹ Euclidian geometry, Hadot claims, remained a kind of systematic ideal in ancient philosophical culture precisely because of its formal, axiomatic presentations of mathematical teachings.⁶⁰ Hence:

... it is necessary to properly acknowledge that this conception of philosophy [as a way of life] presupposes in fact the existence of theoretical discourses which are very systematic. Even in antiquity, the extraordinary coherence of the Stoic system,

55 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 222.

56 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 220.

57 Pierre Hadot, 'Mes livres et mes recherches', in *Exercices Spirituels et Philosophie Antique*, 368. Some formulations express the relationship as completely reciprocal, although clarification can still be desired: 'the choice of life determines the discourse, and the discourse determines the choice of life by justifying it theoretically.' Hadot, *Qu'est-ce que c'est le Philosophie Antique?*, 269, cited at Renaut, 'Philosophy as a Way of Life; *Qu'est-ce que c'est le Philosophie Antique?* Review', 370.

58 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 220.

59 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 'Book X: Epicurus', trans. C.D. Yonge (1895) at www-site <http://www.attalus.org/old/diogenes10a.html> (Letter to Herodotus (paragraphs 35-83), Letter to Pythocles (paragraphs 84-121), Letter to Menoecus (paragraphs 122-138)).

60 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 207-8 ('Many modern historians of philosophy begin with the postulate that Plato and the other ancient philosophers wanted to construct theoretical systems in the same way as modern philosophers. And, in fact, one could believe that this is what they wanted to do, if one judges things by the considerable number of divisions, classifications, and hierarchical distinctions that one finds in ancient philosophy, from Plato to the *Elements of Theology* of Proclus. The famous *Elements of Euclid* indeed represent the endpoint of the idea of Platonic axiomatisation and they remained, for all antiquity, the model of the philosophical exposition, whether for Epicurus or for Proclus. I have myself often been compelled to recognise the traces of this ideal of systematisation amongst the different philosophers, notably amongst the Stoics ...')

for example, was widely admired. And we can recognise also the highly systematic character of Epicurean physics ...⁶¹

Hadot's point is only that such systematisation was not celebrated as the self-standing goal of philosophising *per se* by the ancients. It found its place within a wider array of philosophical endeavours. The key consideration to understand the role of theoretical systematisation in ancient thought remains that philosophising was taken to be meaningfully therapeutic or eudaimonistic, as Nussbaum has argued.⁶² Each school held to what we would call minimally 'cognitivist' views in the philosophy of mind.⁶³ According to views, individuals' apparently 'irrational' desires and passions involve beliefs about the world and what we need within it in order to flourish. Such governing *pathē*, that is to say, constitute already their own kind of 'inner discourse' which has an 'all-too-lived' effect on how we feel, think, and behave. It is this pathological inner discourse, as differently conceived,⁶⁴ which the competing, more compellingly-reasoned accounts of ancient philosophy aim to contest and overthrow:

One could even say that philosophy consists, for those who practice her, in mastering their own inner discourse, on the basis of the theoretical discourse formulated in the school to which they belong ... The student internally repeats in some way the theoretical discourse of the master, the way of putting his interior discourse in order by basing it upon the final principles and options which are the point of departure of the school's theoretical discourse. Philosophical discourse goes, in this sense, 'from the outside to the inside'.⁶⁵

Even theoretical systematisation against this background was recommended not only as a means for students to theoretically comprehend all the aspects, implications, and presuppositions of the school's worldview. It

61 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 213.

62 Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire*.

63 We add 'minimally' here, since some Platonic and Aristotelian formulations (and Platonic metaphors) concerning parts of the psyche point in the direction of conceiving of the passions as irrational, even animalistic. Nevertheless, if philosophy is to have any role as a species of discursive activity, these 'animal passions' must be open to at least hearing the arguments of reason, at least backed by practices of habituation.

64 To use a term revisited by Kant, with a similarly descriptive and normative register.

65 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 213.

was also seen as a means to enable philosophers to *recall* and readily *apply* the principles they had theoretically assented to in relevant instances. Systematisation, that is, was and is an *aide-mémoire*:

The spiritual exercises of the disciple ... consist precisely in his attempts to always have present to mind these rules of life. It is ... in this perspective that we must understand the efforts at systematisation undertaken by the Stoics and Epicureans. The system is not elaborated as an intellectual construction which will be an end in itself ... [t]he Stoic or Epicurean systems have for their goal to bring together as forcefully as possible the different fundamental teachings, ... to concentrate them so that the philosopher can have them at hand at each instant of his life. The presentation in a systematic form [itself] produces certitude, and thus a peace and serenity of mind.⁶⁶

Once more, then, a critical reader might protest that we have reached the uncomfortable situation noted by Cooper et al and reflected in the fact that, for instance, Hadot will at different points describe Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* as a whole as one (*un*) spiritual exercise (as above)⁶⁷, as well as (b) the episodic collection of a *series* of Stoic philosophical exercises addressed by the philosopher-emperor to himself [*Ta Eis Heauton*].⁶⁸ As we might ask, if even systematisation is a spiritual exercise, or (as Hadot himself sometimes claims) if *all* of a book like the *Meditations* is a 'spiritual exercise', hasn't philosophy inescapably lost its identifying concern to discover truth using reason alone, in relative disregard for the well-being or feelings of the inquirer?

With this recurring worry concerning even the more qualified version of Hadot we have so far presented in Part II in mind, we turn now to three of Hadot's lesser-known essays which clarify Hadot's defence of the place of discourse and rigorous argument in ancient philosophy.

Hadot's more famous post-1970 work might be said to largely 'face outwards' towards an anticipated audience of non-specialist readers for whom the entire conception of philosophy as a *bios* will at first seem novel or misgiven. By contrast, 'Les Divisions des Parties de la Philo-

66 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 222.

67 Directly in the quote cited at end of Part I from Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 215.

68 For example at Hadot, 'Mes livres et mes recherches,' 370-371; Cooper makes this (I think correct) point at Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom*, pp. 402-403, n. 4.

sophie dans Antiquité', 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité' and 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?' were published in classics journals (*Studia philosophica*, *Museum Helveticum*) and a learned collection (on *Problèmes de morale antique*). In these pieces, then, Hadot addresses specialists more exclusively. Because he is doing so, he can and does also take more things for granted, historically and metaphilosophically. Like Nielson and Couter's respondents who dive un-self-consciously into Quine, Davidson, 'Oxford Science', Rorty *et al* to answer 'what is philosophy?' in *Métaphilosophie? Reconstructing Philosophy*, in these pieces we see Hadot the philologist at work. He dives *sans apology* into Plato, Polemon, Arcesilaus, Xenocrates, Chrysippus, Plotinus, Cicero, Antiochus, Marcus, Plotinus and Epictetus. The result, as we will now show, is that Hadot here gives a more nuanced picture of the key meta-philosophical claims at issue in ways which allow us to much better put Cooper, Nussbaum, and Williams' worries to rest.

i. 'Ancient Philosophy, an Ethics or a Practice?': a question of replacing a passionate, with a philosophical, 'inner discourse'

We begin with the programmatic Hadotian piece 'Ancient Philosophy, an Ethics or a Practice?' The article, from its opening lines, represents an attempt to explain and defend Hadot's signature claim about the place and role of 'spiritual practices' in ancient philosophy *tout court*. Hadot thus has to address, on one side, how to comprehend why the Platonic, peripatetic, and Stoic philosophers developed such systematic philosophical theories, if their aim was in a decisive sense practical or ethical. On the other side, he has to justify how his idea that for the ancients philosophy was a way of life applied even to Plato and Aristotle, whom modern philosophers tend to think of us more unmistakably 'like us': in the business of theory-construction *sans* wider ethical or existential concerns, as it were.

Concerning the latter charge, Hadot claims that when we today say that Aristotle (to take what seems to be the hardest case) is a more purely 'theoretical' philosopher than, say, the Hellenistics of the period of the 'decline of the Greek city-state'⁶⁹, we court 'confusion concerning what is at stake when Aristotle talks of the 'theoretical'.⁷⁰ We do so to the extent that we obviate how in the *Ethics* X, *Politics* VII and *Metaphysics* XII Aristotle specifies that what he is pre-eminently concerned with when he

69 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 223-224.

70 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 225.

talks of *theoria* is an activity:

... the activity of contemplation, which is the highest human activity. Such theoretical activity is not opposed to practised or lived philosophy, since it is itself a lived practice; the exercise of a life, and of an activity which makes for the happiness of God and of its human practitioner ...⁷¹

The discomfort that even someone as learned as Martha Nussbaum shows in *Fragility of Goodness* about Aristotle's hymn to contemplation in *Nicomachean Ethics* book X (she feels compelled there to simply allocate this text to an earlier 'Platonic' Aristotle, although there is no decisive historical evidence for such a supposition⁷²) underscores Hadot's claim here. Aristotle's *Ethics* indeed culminates in X 7 in a kind of hymn to what Hadot sees is clearly for Aristotle 'a life and a *praxis*, and one which can even unfold in an activity of thought which is non-discursive, when it is a matter of perceiving indivisible objects and God himself by noetic intuition...'⁷³ There is for Hadot no need to hypothesise speculatively about early and later Aristotles to understand the continuity of this famous chapter with the preceding text. The ethical concern with how best to live runs through both, albeit that in book X the best life is supposed to be that which maximally participates in contemplating timeless things.⁷⁴

But what then, if even Platonic and Aristotelian thought thereby admit of extra-discursive ends in a *bios theoretikos*, does Hadot add here to his 'standard image' views concerning the seemingly subordinate place of argued discourse in ancient philosophy?

The central part of 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?' turns more focally to the Stoics. It sees Hadot directly challenging the idea that for them, as we might suppose, 'logic and physics represent[ed] ... the theoretical part of philosophy, and ... ethics [alone] ... that part of philosophy wherein the spiritual exercises, exhortations, meditations, *etc.*, are located.'⁷⁵ Hadot makes much of a distinction in Diogenes Laertius' account of the Stoics in the *Lives of the Philosophers*.

71 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 225.

72 See Martha Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986), 'Appendix to Part III', 373-377.

73 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 225.

74 See Martha Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986), 'Appendix to Part III', 373-377.

The distinction distinguishes:

... between philosophical discourse (*hoi kata philosophian logoi*) and philosophy herself. They [the Stoics] claimed that it was philosophical discourse which was divided into three parts: physics logic and ethics; and this implies that philosophy herself was not, properly speaking, divided into parts ...⁷⁶

Diogenes Laertius VII 39-40 might almost be termed Hadot's golden sentences.⁷⁷ Their interpretation certainly bears a good deal of evidentiary weight for him as guide both to the Stoics and ancient philosophy in this programmatic essay. What Hadot takes Diogenes Laertius to be indicating is that, in the Stoics' physics-logic-ethics division of the parts of philosophy, 'practice' (including the Stoic mnemonic, imaginative, rhetorical and meditative exercises) did not belong within ethics alone; any more than philosophical discourse remained solely the 'theoretical' business concerned with nature (physics) or the structures of thought (logic). On the one, theoretical side, philosophical ethics involved a good deal of theoretical discourse: for example concerning the ontological and anthropological bases for the Stoics' different practical claims. On the other,

75 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 216. This supposition would reflect the broadly Aristotelian sense of the parts of philosophy, which we arguably largely inherit today.

76 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 220.

77 To cite the relevant text in full: '[39] Philosophic doctrine (*hoi kata philosophian logoi*), say the Stoics, falls into three parts: one physical, another ethical, and the third logical. Zeno of Citium was the first to make this division in his Exposition of Doctrine, and Chrysippus too did so in the first book of his Exposition of Doctrine and the first book of his Physics; and so too Apollodorus and Syllus in the first part of their Introductions to Stoic Doctrine, as also Eudromus in his Elementary Treatise on Ethics, Diogenes the Babylonian, and Posidonius. / These parts are called by Apollodorus "Heads of Commonplace"; by Chrysippus and Eudromus specific divisions; by others generic divisions. [40] Philosophy, they say, is like an animal, Logic corresponding to the bones and sinews, Ethics to the fleshy parts, Physics to the soul. Another simile they use is that of an egg : the shell is Logic, next comes the white, Ethics, and the yolk in the centre is Physics. Or, again, they liken Philosophy to a fertile field : Logic being the encircling fence, Ethics the crop, Physics the soil or the trees. Or, again, to a city strongly walled and governed by reason. / No single part, some Stoics declare, is independent of any other part, but all blend together. Nor was it usual to teach them separately. Others, however, start their course with Logic, go on to Physics, and finish with Ethics ; and among those who so do are Zeno in his treatise On Exposition, Chrysippus, Archedemus and Eudromus.'

practical side, more decisively, Hadot claims that the spiritual exercises belong in Diogenes Laertius' distinction on the side of philosophy herself, 'as an exercise of virtue and wisdom ... a unique act, renewed at each instant...', as *against* philosophical *discourse*. And just as there were physical, logical, and ethical parts of Stoic discourse, so too were there 'physical', 'logical', as well as 'ethical exercises' in the way **figure one** maps out.⁷⁸

Figure One: Hadot's 'horizontal', not vertical, Stoic theory-practice division

Theory (discourse)	Discourse about nature (physics)	Discourse about our relations with others; the theoretical bases of duties, etc. (ethics)	Discourse about discourse (what representations are clear and comprehensive, compelling) (logic)
Practice (philosophy herself)	Lived physics: exercises in training desire	Lived ethics: exercises in rationally taming impulses	Lived logic: exercises in disciplining our assent to ideas

What the Stoics' unlikely designations of logical acumen and mastery of physics as 'virtues' of character indicates for Hadot is exactly how attaining knowledge of these parts of philosophical discourse was supposed to have practical 'pay-offs' for the student, in terms of the way she both thought and acted in the world. The cultivation of practiced logic, or what Epictetus calls 'the discipline of assent', teaches us to withhold assent to any ideas that are not clear and comprehensive (as in Seneca's *De Ira*, wherein we can avoid anger by suspending assent about others' badmouthing us, if we know of this only by hearsay, etc.).⁷⁹ Practiced Stoic physics teaches the aspirant to distinguish between things which do and do not depend upon her, so she can train herself by repeated exercises to recognise and welcome everything she cannot control as

⁷⁸ Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 220, 221.

⁷⁹ Seneca, *de Ira* II 24: '... let us believe nothing unless it forces itself upon our sight and is unmistakable [*viz.* the famous *kataleptike phantasia*], and let us reprove ourselves for being too ready to believe, ...: for this discipline will render us habitually slow to believe what we hear.'

evidently having 'been disposed by Zeus Himself (that is to say, universal reason), which He has defined and placed in order with the *Moirai* who, present at your birth, have woven the fabric of your destiny.'⁸⁰ As Hadot explains:

The discipline of desire supposes, therefore, that the developed teachings of theoretical physics concerning the enchainment of causes have been meditated upon, assimilated; that they have become the objects of a concentration of mind [*prise de conscience*], because of which the philosopher perceived himself always as just one part of the Whole. Lived physics is ... this attitude of consent to the will of nature.⁸¹

According to 'Ancient Philosophy, An Ethics or a Practice?', we thus see, philosophy as a *bios* in no way negates the defining import of rational argumentation and discourse in philosophy. Everything remains in place. It is just that Hadot stresses that, for the ancients, philosophical discourse needs to be fully *internalised*, not simply assented to in abstraction, if the practical and normative implications of its theoretical claims about the world are to be integrated into a person's life. The exercises do not usurp the philosophical discourse and theoretical claims, which can be (and were often) highly systematic and rational. They just respond to an all-too-sage recognition of the ethical difficulties for passionate, partial beings like us to avoid what Aristotle thematised as *akrasia* (lack of self-control), even when our admiration for certain philosophical claims convinces us in the abstract that it would be rational and beneficial to live and act in certain ways. Guardrails against *akrasia*, Hadot's spiritual exercises represent the habituating conduits necessary to make the theoretical conquests of the philosophical discourse into the lived realities of students' changed ways of thinking, feeling, and acting, faced with the countervailing forces of habit, convention, and the passions.⁸²

ii. 'The Divisions of the Parts of Philosophy in Antiquity': *hierarchical or organic, in tension with (not trumped by) pedagogical divisions*

If we turn next to 'The Divisions of the Parts of Philosophy in

80 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 218. Hadot is citing Epictetus' *Discourses*, IV.4.13.

81 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 218.

82 For a confirming, intra-mundane perspective on such exercises, see John Sellars, *The Art of Living: the Stoics on the Nature and Function of Philosophy* (London: Duckwell, 2009 (2nd edition)).

Antiquity' (1979), we again see critical anxieties about Hadot not crediting the specifically rational component of ancient philosophy. The standard image underlying these worries would expect Hadot to propose that the pedagogical, and thus rhetorical, concern to form students would completely trump the systematic divisions of the philosophical sciences we see formalised in Aristotle and the Stoics, in particular. The standard image would lead us to expect Hadot to argue that such 'merely discursive' divisions are comparatively unimportant: subordinate to the overarching therapeutic and existential aims of all the ancient philosophies. Yet Hadot's article instead delineates three models for the divisions of philosophical *discourse* in antiquity, more or less wholly leaving aside the issue of the relation of discourse *per se* to the philosophical practices which elsewhere form his focus.

First comes the foundationalist, hierarchical or pyramid-style of divisions between philosophical discourse in Plato and Aristotle (principally *Metaphysics V*), leading up in the latter thinker towards metaphysics as the science of *ousia*, being qua being, and theology as discourse concerning the highest, unchanging and most self-sufficient things.⁸³ By contrast, the second, 'raft'-like model of division of the parts of philosophy amongst the ancient schools is exemplified by the interpenetrating, mutually supporting 'ethics-physics-logic' trinity of the Stoics. This division of the parts of philosophical discourse reflects the Stoics' monistic ontological postulate that the same structuring *Logos* of the world unfolds itself as the organising principle of events (hence, physics), norms of thought (thus, logic) and human relations (whence ethics).⁸⁴

Only with the third type of division between kinds of philosophical discourse in antiquity that Hadot examines—one which involves 'the method of exposition, [and thus] a temporal order, a succession of movements, an intellectual and spiritual progress'⁸⁵ and occupies less than one third of Hadot's essay—do we seem to arrive at specifically Hadotian concerns. This third type of classification is pedagogical: as such, related to the business of shaping students, rather than describing or analysing phenomena, nonhuman and human. Evinced for instance in the later neoPlatonic philosophers' famous concerns about the 'reading order' of the Platonic dialogues (as against more specifically modern preoccupations with their *writing* order), the pedagogical divisions of the parts of

83 Hadot, 'Les Divisions des Parties de la Philosophie dans Antiquité', 127-132.

84 Hadot, 'Les Divisions des Parties de la Philosophie dans Antiquité', 134-136.

85 Hadot, 'Les Divisions des Parties de la Philosophie dans Antiquité', 139.

philosophical discourse 'correspond to the concrete reality of philosophical activity. It is not given once and for all. It is realised in communication ... in the 'discourse' which exposes it and transmits it to the student.'⁸⁶ The concrete demands of addressing real, particular auditors, as all good teachers know, introduces pedagogical priorities. You need to speak to and with students, adapting your discourse and examples to their situation, terms of reference and interests in order then to challenge and educate them—perhaps starting with simpler matters, or treating complex matters more generally, before proceeding to more difficult fare. Such pedagogical requirements can and do pull against the more purely systematic requirements of either of the first two forms of division of the parts of ancient philosophy, Hadot notes. As Aristotle reflects, what is first 'for us' and what is first 'by nature' are different things. This is why, for Aristotle, metaphysics should come *last* pedagogically, even though its objects are 'by nature' *first*; and it is also why the Stoics, while accepting the logical interdependency of physics, ethics, and logic, equivocated and disagreed about which could best be *taught* first.⁸⁷

Our point here is that, far from announcing that ancient philosophy was always only pedagogical—as the standard image of his work might lead us to expect—Hadot's 'Divisions of the Parts of Philosophy in Antiquity' goes no farther than speaking of the 'conflict between the logical and the pedagogical order' in the Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic schools.⁸⁸ Hadot seeks, indeed, to delineate the different ancient *accommodations* of the demands of theory and those of pedagogy, rather than subsuming the former beneath the latter in all cases, as his critics might lead us to suppose. It is only in later antiquity, with the Neoplatonists after the first century CE, that Hadot argues we find ascendant the pedagogical notion of philosophical activity as a course of study which is also a spiritual ascent, beginning from ethics and passing up through physics towards 'epoptic'—the beatific vision of the *ens realissimum*—later transformed by the patristics, Clement and Origen.⁸⁹ He in no way,

86 Hadot, 'Les Divisions des Parties de la Philosophie dans Antiquité', 140. See for example Hadot's 'the exposition is addressed to an auditor, in this auditor introduces another component, to know the phases, the stages of his spiritual progress: it is a matter here* of a properly psychological or more or less pedagogical temporality,' at 140-141.

87 Hadot, 'Les Divisions des Parties de la Philosophie dans Antiquité', 142-3. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, VII 40-41.

88 Hadot, 'Les Divisions des Parties de la Philosophie dans Antiquité', 141.

89 Hadot, 'Les Divisions des Parties de la Philosophie dans Antiquité', 146.

however, claims that this particular later ancient program expressed the agreed model in all of ancient thought.

iii. Hadot on philosophy and dialectic, as in no way subordinated to rhetoric in ancient philosophy

In this light, it becomes less surprising that Hadot's 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité' of the following year (1980), the third of the untranslated essays, again does not propose any grand reduction of philosophy, via dialectic, this time to *rhetoric*—that ancient Platonic foe of philosophical reasoning and rigour. Hadot instead concerns itself first of all with how dialectic, sharply divided by Plato from rhetoric as *the* method of philosophy, is distinguished from 'didactic' philosophy proper in Aristotle; before both dialectic and rhetoric are reintegrated in different ways and phases in the pedagogical programs of the middle and later academy and the Stoa. Hardly a simple whitewash of the place of discursive argumentation in philosophy, the essay is a patient and nuanced historical consideration of different philosophical programs, shaped by differing assessments of both dialectic and rhetoric.

After its famous Platonic denigration beneath philosophical dialectic or *elenchus* in the *Gorgias*, Hadot observes, rhetoric was reinstated as its own subordinate branch of inquiry in the peripatetic Lyceum: both as a protreptic skill to win students to philosophy and educate governing elites,⁹⁰ as well as its own independent subject of study. Yet dialectic for the peripatetics was at the same time downgraded, as against the Platonic conception. It remained an exercise restricted to 'common notions,' in contrast to reasoning on the basis of philosophically secured *axiomata*. Dialectic was to be practiced pedagogically as a kind of 'scholarly exercise' or 'intellectual gymnastics',⁹¹ as Hadot reads the stipulations set out in the *Topics*. Dialectic moves (like rhetoric) from pre-given conclusions ('this guy is innocent') back towards premises ('he wasn't even in the building'), with a view to persuading specific interlocutors ('gentlemen of the jury').⁹² It is thus to be distinguished from philosophical 'analytic',⁹³ on one side (which reasons on the basis of philosophical principles), as well as rhetoric, in a three-fold peripatetic division of possible modes of cognition and persuasion. Most certainly, then, Hadot

90 Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 165.

91 Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 167-9.

92 Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 163-7.

93 Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 177.

grants that dialectic and rhetoric both had a key place in what was taught in the Lyceum, alongside philosophy more narrowly viewed—yet in no way suggests philosophy lost its specificity thereby.

When it comes to the post-Platonic Athenian academy, Hadot argues that philosophical teaching actually seems very largely to have been carried out in dialectical exercises *contra theism*: wherein some question ('can the sage be angered?') was either put by the students to a master who would then rhetorically expostulate in an extended, crafted discourse (in the early academy); or later, students would be asked to present some opinion ('the sage will never experience fear') which the teacher would then dialectically contest. Such programs reflect the Platonic sense that philosophy is a dialectical business, in contrast sophistry or oratory, practices of captivating monologue.⁹⁴ Later, in the probabilistic, post-Arcesilausian Academy (although never in the Stoics⁹⁵), the teacher would present arguments for either side of a question *in utramque partem*, a feat modelled in Cicero's *de Republica* III or *de Natura Deorum*.⁹⁶

In the Stoic school, meanwhile, the header 'logic' came to encompass both rhetoric and dialectic: as such, these practices were together assigned to just one of the three parts of philosophical discourse. Yet the former, rhetoric, remained more or less distrusted by the Stoics, who prided themselves on their Socratic credentials, at the same time as they understood well its psychological powers.⁹⁷ And dialectic here, far from serving any solely psychagogic, extraphilosophical ends, was considered essential as the principal means of teaching students to maieutically clarify their 'natural notions' about things: so that their inner *Logos* might harmonise with the larger *Logos* or order of things.⁹⁸

What 'Philosophy, Dialectic, and Rhetoric in Antiquity' accordingly makes very clear is that the kind of primacy of rhetoric over argument

94 See Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, 63-71.

95 Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 173-4

96 Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 170-2. Even after the dispersal of the schools in the Roman period, and the increasing recourse to textual commentary in Alexandria and elsewhere in the empire, Plotinus' *Enneads* would be based on Plotinus' responses to students' questions; and Epictetus would divide classes between expositions of Chrisippus and dialectical exercises with students. (Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 175-6)

97 Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 173, 180.

98 Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 177-178.

that Nussbaum, Cooper at al's critiques of Hadot's idea of philosophy as a way of life would lead us to expect everywhere in Hadot's work, *just does not exist*. Here again, the point that admitting that rhetoric played an important role in some of the ancient philosophical exercises does not open the floodgates towards any kind of usurpation of argument's proper role. Any such primacy of rhetoric amongst the ancients, this essay instead argues, arose only in the probabilistic academy with the 'Ciceronian ideal of the orator-philosopher,' and then after the end of pagan antiquity, by way of the Christian acceptance of Ciceronian and certain Aristotelian texts.⁹⁹ If anything, it is the 'question-answer' schema that Hadot stresses in this piece as having presided over ancient philosophical teaching across the ancient schools, which left its mark on the predominant ancient philosophical genres of the epistle and the dialogue.

Such a primacy might give comfort to us, as professional teachers of philosophy today, given the parallels Cooper rightly observes between 'the question-and-answer dialectic of the character Socrates in Plato's Socratic dialogues ... or, again, in the writings of a contemporary analytic philosopher ...'¹⁰⁰ Hadot's argument in 'Philosophy, Dialectic, and Rhetoric in Antiquity' does still finally go in a different direction from what his analytic critics might have led readers to expect. For as with philosophical systematisation, Hadot here stresses that dialectic, 'always addressed to someone' and beginning *ad hominem* in *their* opinions or 'common notions,' was conceived not simply as the best means to discover theoretical truths (when it was conceived in this way). It was also conceived as the primary means available to pedagogues to operate the 'radical' philosophical 'conversion of the [students'] natural attitudes, a rupture with their 'everyday' way of seeing things' by way of the 'systematisation of these common notions'. And this 'conversion', we know he thinks is the core of ancient philosophising as involving a way of life.¹⁰¹ On this model, even the modes of philosophical argument and discussion we teach in academic classrooms today might be considered as

99 Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 183. The middle academy adapted Plato's willingness to accept 'likely stories,' and merely persuasive (as against convincing) dialectical inquiries concerning uncertain matters (like cosmogenesis in the *Timaeus*): a situation which the sceptical Platonists famously held applied much more generally than their founder. *Loc cit*, 179.

100 Cooper, *Pursuits*, 17.

101 Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 185; see Pierre Hadot, 'Conversion', in *Exercices Spirituels et Philosophie Antique*, 223-238.

continuous with Hadot's sense of philosophical activity. Hadot will elsewhere insist that dialogue was for the ancients a spiritual exercise, as well as a mode of inventing, discovering, or defending propositions.¹⁰²

Concluding Remarks

Pierre Hadot has famously defended the unusual idea that ancient philosophy involved spiritual exercises, including non- or extra-cognitive activities like forms of memorisation, meditation, or counselling. We have argued here that this just did not and does not commit him to down-playing, dismissing, distorting or denying ancient philosophers' specific discursive means and practices, or their systematic theoretical goals (at least the goals of the dogmatic, non-sceptical schools). In Part 2, we have shown by recourse to three lesser-known Hadotian essays how his meta-philosophical vision of the ancient philosophers did not commit Hadot, either *de jure* or *de facto*, to arguing either that all philosophy was directly ethical *sans* theoretical interest or impartiality (an idea corrected in 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?'); or that philosophy's pedagogical interest in existentially transforming students militated against the rational systematisation of philosophical claims (the idea we have seen refuted by 'Les Divisions des Parties de la Philosophie dans Antiquité'); or, finally, that philosophy's transformative or therapeutic ends reduce all philosophical discourse to mere rhetoric (an idea which we have seen disproven by 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité').

Although we cannot pursue this here, it is worth finally repeating that for Hadot, the spiritual exercises about which Cooper, Nussbaum or even Brad Inwood¹⁰³ seem anxious had no more mystical or necessarily extra-rational purpose than addressing that worry Aristotle registers in the *Ethics*, when he notes that many people 'take refuge in theory and think they are being philosophers and will become good in this way, behaving somewhat like patients who listen attentively to their doctors, but do none of the things they are ordered to do.'¹⁰⁴ This is why he can and does disclose evidence across each of the schools, including those dour materi-

¹⁰²Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?* trans. M. Chase (London: Belknap Press, 2002), 6, 56, 63-69, 73-74.

¹⁰³Brad Inwood, 'Review of John Sellars, *The Art of Living: the Stoics on the Nature and Function of Philosophy*', *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* 2004.04.04, online at [www-site https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/23760-the-art-of-living-the-stoics-on-the-nature-and-function-of-philosophy/](https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/23760-the-art-of-living-the-stoics-on-the-nature-and-function-of-philosophy/), last accessed November 2015.

¹⁰⁴Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* II.4 (end).

alists, the Epicureans. Creatures in good measure of custom or habits which often persist, unhappily, long after we have become aware of their undesirability, regimens of repeated exercise can be seen—very rationally—to be the kind of thing the philosopher interested in living according to their philosophical convictions will need. Rhetoric is here called for, not to trump rational argument, but if anything to make vividly clear and urgent the conclusions of philosophical deliberations: as when Hadot talks of Marcus writing down 'chapter headers' in his *Meditations*—aphoristic formulations which serve to recall to mind the Stoic theoretical ideas he has accepted as right or true, as well as the entire inferential background that has led to this practical conclusion; or undertaking 'imaginative variations' depicting for himself the results, again, of Stoic physical theory—like when he urges himself to recall that wine is but the juice of a grape, sex the physical rubbing together of two bodies, the entirety of Augustus' or previous emperors' great retinues now dead.¹⁰⁵

Everywhere for Hadot the philosophically-argued vision of the world and of the good life remains directive, as we might say. But the philosophical therapist and *director*¹⁰⁶ also appreciates the very good philosophical and psychological arguments in favour of students undertaking extra-argumentative exercises to 'contract a confederacy between the reason and imagination against the affections...', rather than dreaming that theory alone assists people in living better, more philosophical lives.¹⁰⁷

105Hadot, *Inner Citadel*, 38, 47-48.

106On the notion of 'spiritual director' in the ancients, compare Ilsetraut Hadot, *Sénèque: direction spirituelle et pratique de la philosophie*. (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin), 2014.

107Bacon, *Advancement* II.XVIII.4.